

MINUTES
BOARD OF LIBRARY COMMISSIONERS
OF THE CITY OF GRAND RAPIDS

April 30, 2024 | 5:15 pm
111 Library St NE | Board Room

Anderson called the meeting to order at 5:17 pm.

1. ROLL CALL

Board Members Present: Rachel Anderson, Kelly Boston, Kathryn Dilley, Sheila García Mazari, Kristin Kopec, Kevin Peterson, Lauren Woolsey

Board Members Absent:

Administration Present: Robert Adcock, Lindsay Laplow, John McNaughton, Patrick Beatty

Staff Present: Megan Biggins, John Bosma, Erin Hart, Ann Neff-Rohs

Public Present: Steven Assarian, GREIU;
Jax Johnson

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR BOARD MEETING ON MARCH 26, 2024

MOTION: By Commissioner Woolsey, supported by Commissioner Kopec, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the minutes of the regular board meeting of March 26, 2024.

No comments.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

3. BOARD COMMENTS

Peterson thanks Neff-Rohs and Biggins for attending Michigan Library Association (MLA) Advocacy Day and sharing their expertise.

Boston comments that she visited the Ottawa Hills Branch recently. She says that she called to ask about whether they had a book a student was looking for, they confirmed they did, and a staff member pulled the book for her so it was ready to be picked up when she arrived. She adds that the staff at that branch are great.

McNaughton comments that Cooperative Director Carol Dawe from the Lakeland Library Cooperative reached out to him and mentioned Biggins', Neff-Rohs,' and the board's work and was impressed with everyone who represented GRPL at MLA Advocacy Day.

4. COMMITTEE REPORTS

a. Legislative

Peterson comments that there were more than 200 library representatives across the state meeting with their legislators to advocate for funding and the freedom to read. He had an opportunity to meet with 4 legislators and felt like everything was very well received by them. He believes that this gave GRPL a good pathway for future talking points.

Anderson added that legislators need to hear as much as possible about Freedom to Read and believe that directly commenting to legislators will help them appreciate the importance and use that support to put forth bills regarding the freedom to read.

García Mazari says she was there as well to support school librarians, advocating for conducting research, and providing research resources. Legislators were open to listening. She adds that it was a good experience and an opportunity to possibly build relationships over time.

Boston adds that Representative Carol Glanville is working on the push for requiring school librarians in schools.

Anderson commends Librarian Erin Antes for attending MLA Advocacy Day with GRPL's Mobile Library. Neff-Rohs commends Director of Marketing & Communications Katie Zychowski for coordinating the new branding on the Mobile Library in time to attend the event. Biggins adds that Neff-Rohs is on the MLA Advocacy Committee and she put a lot of work in for this event.

Woolsey comments that she is happy to hear about everything going on.

b. Policy

No comments.

c. Board Retreat

No comments.

5. STAFF & FOUNDATION REPORTS

A. Library Director's Report

Woolsey comments that she loves the new Staff Picks cards.

Anderson comments that she interacts with the Staff Picks videos on social media.

García Mazari comments that she likes the look of the new outreach kits and adds that she is glad there are kits for staff ready to grab when they're on their way to events.

Woolsey asks whether we train teachers to fill out youth library card applications. Boston asks if schools have applications to use. Biggins explains that we have the application on our website for teachers to use. Boston asks if we have educator cards for teachers. Biggins answers that we have institution cards and adds that library card rules and types are something we are looking at to increase accessibility.

B. Financial Report

Adcock comments that we're gearing up for the end of the fiscal year right now and that he believes we're in good shape. He adds that since the rate increase in the parking lot has happened, there have been notable changes in activity levels and feels that we are in a better position than we were a month ago. Peterson comments that the City is also planning to raise their rates and asks if we are planning to raise ours to stay competitive. McNaughton says we'll be keeping an eye on it.

Anderson asks about the overtime line in the report. Adcock explains that the totals overall are lower and we have plenty of money in our budget to cover this. Anderson asked if adjustments have been made for next fiscal year to cover the change in overtime. Adcock answers yes.

C. Foundation Update

GRPLF Chair Dan Poortenga could not attend the meeting and sent the following update via email. McNaughton reads this on his behalf:

"The Grand Rapids Public Library Foundation is pleased to have granted over \$101,000 last week to the library! This funding will support programs including the Poet Laureate, Hispanic Heritage, Native American Heritage, and Adult Storytime. It will also allow for the purchase of more eBooks and the annual payment for the newly acquired Grand Rapids Press Historical Archives database. The GRPLF Board is appreciative to library staff for the detailed grant requests that were submitted."

Dilley comments that the GRPLF board meeting was informational and says that there were 4 grant proposals that they voted on. Anderson thanks her for attending the meeting.

6. OLD BUSINESS

None.

7. NEW BUSINESS

A. Office Assistant II Position Proposal

McNaughton explains that we are requesting the creation of an Office Assistant II position because of the increase in safety incidents at the library and introduces Community Services Manager John Bosma.

Bosma explains that this new position's tasks are split between the Community Support and Safety Department and the Public Services Department. The primary goal of adding this position is to have support in order to free up his capacity to work on more strategic, long-term community support and safety functions. He explains the importance of recording safety incidents within reports accurately. This position will do this task so others in the department can work on training front-facing staff, creating procedural development and clarity, providing rule enforcement, and creating procedures around connecting vulnerable patrons to resources. This will allow the department to do work that will provide a greater impact.

Peterson asks if this will allow for Bosma to be more proactive. Bosma says yes.

Biggins explains that the other half of the position's duties will be amongst staff and the public and will have a community outreach component.

Peterson asks about the anticipated scope of the outreach component. Biggins explains that it'll be similar to attending tabling events, and helping the Mobile Library by making library cards and directing patrons to library resources.

Kopec asks what qualifications are required for the position. Bosma answers that public service experience is preferred, Spanish speaking is preferred, and it does not require a Masters in Library and Information Science degree.

Dilley asks if they will primarily be working from the Main Library or if they will be mobile. Bosma explains that they will have a desk at the Main Library but they will sometimes travel with the Mobile Library. Biggins adds that the Mobile Library work is seasonal. Dilley asks whether they are front-facing. McNaughton and Bosma explain that the position will be both administrative and front-facing.

Dilley asks if this person will be working with other community organizations as a dispatcher. Bosma explains that they will be able to work with some community organizations and that they would be helping with connecting patrons to other community resources. He adds that all front-facing staff receive de-escalation training. Dilley asks if this will provide support for certain circumstances to free up Bosma. Bosma says yes and this position will assist the Resource Navigator as well, but the position will be prioritizing detailed administrative work. He says a lot of the job duties will be researching incidents that have taken place and assisting on the follow up procedures. He clarifies that it isn't a dispatcher role. Woolsey asks if this position's duties are primarily paperwork. Bosma says yes.

Boston asks what education level will be required. Biggins answers that a high-school diploma is required and any additional training needed will be provided by the library.

Peterson asks about the timeline for hiring for this position. Bosma and Biggins say they will hire as soon as possible.

Kopec asks if the amount listed within the proposal is the total compensation including benefits. Adcock says yes.

MOTION: By Commissioner Kopec, supported by Commissioner Peterson, that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids approve the proposed Office Assistant II position request, effective April 30, 2024.

Boston asks how the split of time between departments is going to work. Biggins answers that the Community Support and Safety Department's busiest season is Winter, and Summer is the busiest season for outreach. She adds that schedules will be negotiated often to fit the needs of the organization.

McNaughton explains that until the staffing study is completed, this is how the library decided to move forward to remain fiscally responsible. Anderson comments that she's glad this is a full-time position instead of two part-time positions.

Woolsey asks why there is a different Office Assistant II position currently open. Biggins explains that we just interviewed for the other position. She also explains how the currently-open position differs from the proposed position. McNaughton adds that we have been receiving great candidates lately and hiring for these positions has been very competitive.

ACTION: AYES 7 – 0

Motion passed.

8. INFORMATION ITEMS

A. Media Index

Woolsey comments that she hopes the solar eclipse went well in Grand Rapids.

B. Staffing Report

No comments.

C. Statistical Report for March 2024

No comments.

9. GRAND RAPIDS EMPLOYEES INDEPENDENT UNION

Assarian presents a letter to the board regarding a recent staff resignation that the staff member asked him to read aloud. He reads the letter to the board.

10. AGENDA ITEMS FOR REGULAR BOARD MEETING: MAY 28, 2024

Anderson reminds the board to let her know if anything needs to be added to May's agenda.

11. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Johnson comments that the board packet's revenue and expense statements are not available online and requests adding them to the meeting minutes section for public access.

12. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: By Commissioner García Mazari that the Board of Library Commissioners of the City of Grand Rapids adjourn the meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 pm.